

LANDSCAPE IS DIFFERENT – SO ARE THE HANGOUTS

Muriel (Hanson) Beaulier

The Daily News, Iron Mountain-Kingsford, Michigan
Friday, March 31, 1995, page 10-A, columns 2-6

Summit Dairy, City Park swimming pool, Cedar Avenue rink were once popular

KINGSFORD – Iron Mountain and Kingsford, two small cities in the Upper Peninsula, joining each other with a concrete road – and the best place in the world to live.

I was originally from the west end of Iron Mountain, but it could have been anywhere else in town and I wouldn't have cared. Sure, some people were prejudiced and wanted to live in a certain section, but you find that in any town.

I know this article will surely date me and that's not important and I won't say "aging" because that's for cheese.

I remember when:

– **Best Creamery** on Cedar Avenue had the cheapest and largest ice cream cones in town and the Summit Dairy had the best malts.

– **The Hulst School**, standing high up on Iron Mountain's east side, towered over the town like some medieval castle.

– Driving south on **Stephenson Avenue**, you saw only bare, wind-blown and snow-blown fields. There was [*sic – were*] no gas stations, motels, McDonald's nor a veterans' hospital but Von Platten [*sic – Von Platen*] Fox Mill was there with its mammoth piles of logs.

– Driving south on **Carpenter Avenue** you viewed the same landscape with no churches, Shopko, Dairy Queen, Burger King or Ford garage. To the east was **Cemetery Park**, and the west was the **Ford plant** where gliders were being assembled for World War II.

– The **roller rink on Cedar Avenue** was a popular hangout for the groovy crowd and a place we could finally attend on our own, without our parents being present, when we turned 15!

– Walking through the snow six miles to view the **Pine Mountain ski tournaments** was a big event of the winter season, and you always ate one of **Rocheleau's Bakery pasties** and then went to the ski lodge for hot chocolate and one of **Erickson's doughnuts**. Riding to the ski tournaments in Ishpeming in the rumbleseat was fun, but we arrived with red, cold noses.

– Priming **the outside pump** for water was a daily affair and in winter you didn't stick your wet tongue on the handle! (It wasn't much fun [*sic – fun*] getting pried off.)

– Having the tip of an ice skate hit you squarely between the eyes on **Mud Lake** and having to go to the **Ford Hospital** (just a house) to have a metal clamp put on it.

– Snakes always in our **outside privy** and also under the hay pile in the spring of the year.

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– Our tom cat, **Toby**, sleeping on top of Nellie, our cow, where it was nice and warm.

– Swimming (or trying to as there were so many kids in it) [*in*] the **oblong cement pool at City Park** and laying afterwards on the huge piles of future telephone poles, to dry off, and the walking along the outskirts of **Pine Grove Country Club** in our shoes and bathing suits, looking for golf balls we'd sell back to the golfers.

– Always watermelon and root beer included in the **picnics both at City Park and Lake Antoine Park**, for the **Fourth of July**.

– The **pit caving in** with uncle's truck still stuck on the bottom.

– Making fudge and eating it with a spoon while still warm because we couldn't wait for it to cool, and harden, as we listened to **Major Bowle's Amateur Hour** and many other oldies on our entertainment center – the radio.

– **Roasting whole potatoes** down on the corner with all the kids on the block and going home, our faces as black as the night.

– Riding, all huddled up, in the back seat of the **Model A** for the long trip to Crystal Falls to visit Grandma in her log house, and she would immediately serve some of her recipe – homemade dandelion wine – to warm us up, she said. In the summers, fishing at **Triangle Ranch**

just out of Amasa for those elusive trout.

– Spending long, hot summer months at our tiny two-room camp at **Granite Bluff** and dad bringing back for breakfast a basket full of small brook trout. The huge, black wood cookstove baked the best-tasting pasties in the world, prepared by mom and we'd eat them in the shade of the pin cherry tree.

– Sitting on top of a wagon piled high with fresh-cut hay on its way to the barn on a farm owned by the **Donaldson Brothers**, in **Granite Bluff** and being so afraid of their wolf dog, "Sacutto." We enjoyed watching the men at hay-tine devour the pail-full of chicken stew mom cooked for them.

– Riding our sleighs [*sic – sleds*] all the way down **West Brown Street hill**, almost landing in the swamp, and then sleeping, three and four of us in a bed at a neighbor's house. We never worried whether the hot stove pipe above us might burst and burn us up alive.

– Watching out-of-towners come off the **Chippewa train** and walk over to the **Dickinson Inn** for lodging, or waiting at the airport for a plane to come in.

– Trying to eat our dinner while staring at a plate piled high with mom's **homemade cream-puffs**.

– Spending two wonderful weeks at **Bay Cliff Health Camp** in

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Marquette for undernourished children. (I was tiny then and am tiny now.)

– All the kids screaming when the lights dimmed and the matinee began at either the **Colonial or Braumart Theaters**.

– Listening to the beautiful tunes he played on his **harmonica** by my handsome and youngest uncle, who was crippled and spent his 30 years in a rocking chair.

– Trembling in that huge dental chair at **Lincoln School** while waiting for the school dentist, **Dr. Atwell**, and his assistant, **LaVerne Prenevost**, to come in.

– Driving out to the **Rex Theater** on Friday nights on **West Breen Avenue** and on some nights we would view three Western movies. Further up the street was **Abe Cohodes & Sons**, a building which held and sold the clothing for the working man. Piled high were bib overalls and they were called bibs back then and are called bibs today – not jeans or denims.

– Having dogs, cats, a cow, chickens but not our nightly **wish-a-horse!**

Oh, this is merely a fraction of what occurred during my younger days and others have similar or widely different events they can recall.

I can just hear the youth of today groaning and muttering such words

as “boring, square, freaky and no-way-man!” But then, there just may be a few who would utter, “Awesome, cool, the-way-to-go!” I wonder.